

United Dairy Seeks Premium Increase

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — United Dairy Services President Edward D. Anna recently asked the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board to raise the minimum Class I premium above the current \$1.35 per hundredweight (cwt).

Mr. Anna was speaking at a hearing held May 9 at Harrisburg in support of the entire rural economy that is currently in a crisis state due to a 30 percent decline in dairy farmer milk income.

Anna said that the \$1.35 premium was originally set when farmers were receiving over \$13 per cwt, and now with farmers receiving only \$11 per cwt a premium higher than \$1.35 is warranted and will have no adverse impact on consumers.

Anna also said his retail store survey information indicated consumers in Pennsylvania pay less for the milk than consumers in

neighboring states including New York, and that all consumers are getting more than their money's worth.

United Dairy Services under Mr. Anna provide marketing and management services to farmers in the Progressive Milk Producers Cooperative and others located in Pennsylvania and New York.

In his testimony before the PMMB, Anna said that with 24 percent of the nation's population in the Northeast and only 18 percent of the nation's milk supply, the region has a shortage of milk.

Dairy foods must be imported into this area to meet the consumers' demand for these products.

In the last three to four years, major dairy manufacturing plants have been closed in Allentown, and in the New York communities of Horseheads, Cochocton, and Elbridge. The closings were due in

part to the lack of an adequate supply of farm milk at a reasonable price.

Anna said that he is concerned that the continuation of inadequate income to the Northeast dairy farmers will drive more families off the farms and onto the public dole.

The loss of additional farmers will further shrink the available milk supplies and make it difficult for local manufacturers to keep their plants open to meet the needs of Northeast consumers.

In other testimony by economists from the Springfield Bank for Cooperatives and Penn State and a number of farmers, the cost to produce milk on the farm was shown to be well over \$14 per cwt.

With a current income base of just over \$11 per cwt, Anna asked the Pennsylvania Milk Marketing Board to raise its minimum premium above the current \$1.35. He said that neighboring states have set about to follow Pennsylvania's lead in trying to meet the needs of the farm economy.

In addition he said that regional bargaining cooperatives should follow suit and try to raise farm income over current the market price.

Food Irradiation

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kGy. "What we are saying is that the 3-kiloGray limitation approved by the FDA should provide ample protection for poultry," said Thayer.

What the research found was that, in the presence of air and near room temperature, more *Salmonella* bacteria were killed.

Vitamins affected

The next step is looking at how much the vitamins — including B, D, E, thiamine and riboflavin — are affected.

Food irradiation has been approved for limited use in the United States since 1963, when "radurization" of wheat and potatoes was permitted by the FDA, according to the organization. It has been in use more than a decade in other countries, where more than 35 nations now use it.

According to "Food Irradiation: Benefits and Concerns," by Thayer from the "Journal of Food Quality," ionizing irradiation has been proposed for many other types of uses, including:

- Insect disinfestation of grain; dried spices, vegetables, or fruits; and fresh fruits.
- Inhibition of sprouting in tubers and bulbs.
- Alteration of postharvest ripening and senescence of fruits.
- Inactivation of protozoa or helminths in meats and fish.
- Elimination of spoilage microorganisms from fresh fruits

and vegetables.

- Pasteurization of sterilization of dried spices and vegetables.
- Extension of shelf life of meats, poultry, fish, or shellfish.
- Elimination of bacterial pathogens from meats, poultry, fish, or shellfish.
- Sterilization of foods and feeds.

According to several sources, when combined with refrigeration, irradiation can extend the shelf life of fresh meats from several days to several weeks.

Irradiation in use

Working with the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service, and after the results are in, food irradiation will be in use by packagers. One such packager, Vindicator, in Florida, is experimenting with irradiation using electron beams that X-rays like those in use in dental offices.

The food will have to carry the label — the international irradiation symbol (a flower design).

Soon afterward, many consumers may have a higher degree of confidence that what they are purchasing is a safer product because of irradiation, said Thayer.

"Poultry irradiated under proper conditions will be wholesome, may have an extended shelf life when properly refrigerated, and will have a significantly improved microbiological safety," said Thayer.

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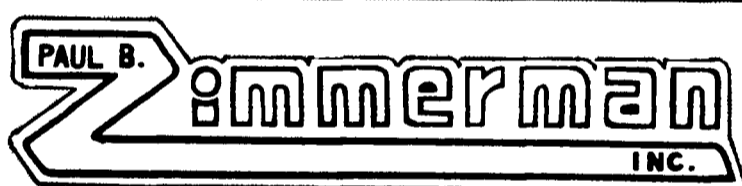
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